

INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES, AUSTRALIA, MARCH 1989

25 JUL 1989

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- *about these statistics and the availability of related unpublished statistics*—contact Fiona Blackshaw on Canberra (062) 52 6561 or any ABS State office.
- *about other statistics and ABS services*—contact Information Services on Canberra (062) 52 6007, 52 6627, 52 5402 or any ABS State office.

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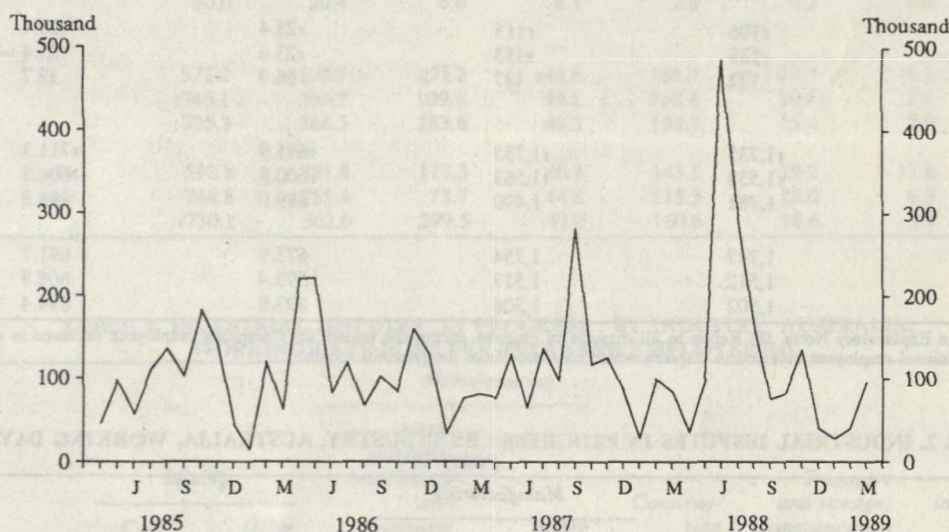
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MAIN FEATURES

WORKING DAYS LOST, AUSTRALIA



In March 1989—

- There were 97,000 working days lost, a 126.4% increase from February 1989 (42,800) and the highest March level since March 1984 (121,000).
- 137 disputes were reported in progress involving 39,700 employees.
- Disputes in the Other manufacturing industry grouping accounted for 45.6% (44,200) of total working days lost.

In the 12 months ended March 1989—

- 1,490 disputes were reported in progress involving 898,800 employees and the loss of 1,595,900 working days.
- 259 working days were lost per thousand employees, compared with 226 and 239 for the twelve month periods ending March 1988 and 1987 respectively.
- Tasmania recorded 96 working days lost per thousand employees, the lowest number of working days lost per thousand employees of any State/Territory in that period and the lowest for Tasmania for any twelve month period since this statistic was first calculated, in December 1979.
- 1,477 disputes were reported as ending during the period, involving 891,800 employees and the loss of 1,661,300 working days.
- For disputes ending during the period, disputes concerning wage claims accounted for 47.5% of all employees involved and 30.5% of working days lost.
- Disputes of 1 day's duration or less accounted for 43.5% (723,300) of working days lost and 82.1% (731,700) of all employees involved in disputes ending during the period.
- 57.1% (843) of disputes were resolved by resumption of work without negotiation, while disputes resolved through Federal and joint Federal-State legislation accounted for 47.6% (791,100) of working days lost.

NOTES

The statistics of industrial disputes are compiled mainly from data obtained from employers (both private and public sector) and trade unions concerning individual disputes, and from reports of government authorities.

The statistics relate to disputes which involved stoppages of work of ten working days or more at the establishments where the stoppages occurred.

A Glossary and Explanatory Notes are published on pages 5 to 7 of this publication.

TABLE 1. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : AUSTRALIA

			Employees involved ('000)		Working days lost ('000)
Number of disputes(a)					
Period	Commenced in period	Total(b)	Newly involved(c)	Total(b)	
1988	January	81	86	12.2	12.6
	February	139	149	44.0	58.1
	March	168	187	34.7	41.9
	April	100	108	19.8	21.2
	May	147	159	57.4	68.5
	June	165	186	364.0	374.5
	July	91	107	117.5	192.8
	August	142	151	107.1	116.2
	September	109	121	33.7	49.7
	October	139	151	36.6	41.1
	November	150	167	51.8	59.0
	December	71	93	15.1	25.8
1989	January	106	115	25.4	28.4
	February	139	153	23.6	25.4
	March	122	137	36.9	39.7
Twelve months ended—					
March	1987	1,735	1,755	691.9	711.3
	1988	1,538	1,563	600.8	606.5
	1989	1,481	1,490	889.0	898.8
December	1986	1,747	1,754	673.9	691.7
	1987	1,512	1,517	593.4	608.8
	1988	1,502	1,508	893.9	894.4

(a) See paragraph 5 of the Explanatory Notes. (b) Refers to all disputes in progress during the period. (c) Comprises employees involved in disputes which commenced during the month and additional employees involved in disputes which continued from the previous month.

TABLE 2. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : BY INDUSTRY, AUSTRALIA, WORKING DAYS LOST ('000)

		Manufacturing							
		Mining		Metal products, machinery and equipment	Other	Construction	Transport and storage; Communication	Other industries (a)	All industries
Period		Coal	Other						
1988	January	10.1	0.9	1.3	1.3	7.5	1.5	6.6	29.2
	February	47.4	11.4	8.4	7.6	7.2	3.4	15.1	100.5
	March	34.0	10.3	3.8	8.8	14.9	4.4	8.6	84.8
	April	3.5	3.2	3.6	0.7	6.4	2.9	16.3	36.6
	May	27.9	3.9	19.2	5.0	29.4	3.0	12.6	101.0
	June	123.5	5.6	168.1	15.6	64.6	17.4	93.4	488.3
	July	77.6	3.8	66.7	33.9	30.5	20.0	65.3	297.8
	August	18.9	8.3	9.3	13.5	7.2	1.8	107.2	166.2
	September	25.3	6.4	15.8	5.8	8.8	7.0	7.2	76.3
	October	25.1	7.6	5.1	3.2	23.9	5.4	13.0	83.3
	November	57.5	33.1	7.3	15.1	1.7	7.4	14.0	136.1
	December	r20.7	2.8	0.8	6.8	5.7	1.0	3.6	r41.4
1989	January	r8.7	2.2	2.4	3.6	2.2	5.7	4.3	r29.1
	February	r8.9	1.5	14.4	r8.0	2.4	3.0	4.7	r42.8
	March	11.5	4.4	13.1	44.2	6.5	14.3	2.9	97.0
Twelve months ended—									
March	1987	300.1	186.6	199.6	223.4	r137.8	53.0	275.2	r1,375.6
	1988	r344.7	58.5	183.0	180.8	191.1	91.3	r292.8	r1,342.2
	1989	409.0	82.9	325.9	155.3	189.5	88.8	344.4	1,595.9
December	1986	362.0	179.4	187.4	205.3	117.7	57.6	281.4	1,390.7
	1987	291.8	55.7	199.6	195.5	194.5	92.5	282.3	1,311.9
	1988	r471.3	97.4	309.5	117.4	207.9	75.0	362.9	r1,641.4

(a) Comprises Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; Electricity, gas and water; Wholesale and retail trade; Finance, property and business services; Public administration and defence; Community services; Recreation, personal and other services.

TABLE 3. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : STATES AND TERRITORIES, AUSTRALIA, WORKING DAYS LOST ('000)

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
1988									
January	9.6	1.6	13.2	0.6	3.4	0.3	0.4	—	29.2
February	62.7	9.5	7.8	5.3	12.4	0.9	1.2	0.6	100.5
March	26.5	13.2	21.4	0.7	17.2	3.4	1.4	1.0	84.8
April	10.7	13.1	3.3	1.3	5.3	1.5	0.2	1.3	36.6
May	39.3	5.8	45.8	2.6	5.1	0.9	0.9	0.6	101.0
June	269.0	64.7	94.2	23.4	24.8	3.5	1.3	7.4	488.3
July	48.6	181.8	49.8	4.7	9.7	2.9	—	0.2	297.8
August	120.5	21.2	6.8	4.1	7.3	3.5	1.7	1.2	166.2
September	30.2	22.7	12.8	0.6	9.1	0.1	—	0.8	76.3
October	31.7	7.4	11.3	1.1	30.2	0.8	0.5	0.3	83.3
November	59.9	10.1	30.3	1.0	33.2	0.7	0.2	0.8	136.1
December	r21.4	11.6	2.8	1.6	2.9	—	1.1	—	r41.4
1989									
January	r13.7	2.0	8.1	0.9	2.0	1.1	0.9	0.5	r29.1
February	r20.3	5.8	11.8	2.2	2.0	0.1	0.6	—	r42.8
March	60.0	20.4	6.6	6.1	2.8	0.2	0.6	0.4	97.0
Twelve months ended—									
March 1987	572.2	r393.9	155.2	r44.6	161.7	27.7	9.1	11.3	r1,375.6
1988	r745.1	269.7	109.6	48.1	118.4	30.6	7.8	12.8	r1,342.2
1989	725.3	366.5	283.6	49.5	134.3	15.4	7.9	13.4	1,595.9
December 1986	598.8	381.8	173.3	46.3	143.1	29.2	11.8	6.5	1,390.7
1987	744.8	281.4	73.7	44.6	115.3	28.0	6.5	17.5	1,311.9
1988	r730.1	362.6	299.5	47.0	160.6	18.6	8.9	14.1	r1,641.4

TABLE 4. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : BY INDUSTRY, AUSTRALIA, WORKING DAYS LOST PER THOUSAND EMPLOYEES(a)

Period	Manufacturing							
	Mining		Metal products, machinery and equipment	Other	Construc-tion	Transport and storage; Communication	Other industries (b)	All industries
	Coal	Other						
Twelve months ended—								
1985—								
December	6,892	1,928	256	312	666	430	71	228
1986—								
December	10,741	3,328	445	328	458	135	72	242
1987—								
December	8,920	1,072	479	305	743	217	70	223
1987—								
March	r8,890	r3,584	478	356	r535	124	70	r239
1988—								
January	9,258	820	474	302	741	213	70	221
February	9,845	984	481	286	734	216	71	225
March	10,791	1,094	440	280	716	215	71	226
April	10,504	1,078	384	265	705	208	73	218
May	10,498	1,109	336	233	735	202	73	212
June	14,292	1,121	715	234	910	236	93	282
July	15,761	1,001	819	264	858	278	107	308
August	15,912	1,040	807	252	835	274	126	318
September	13,626	1,107	790	251	721	280	101	283
October	13,977	1,163	771	235	732	230	98	276
November	15,198	1,742	764	213	712	237	88	277
December	r15,548	1,777	750	183	725	177	85	269
1989—								
January	r15,575	1,805	751	186	702	187	84	267
February	r14,360	1,625	765	187	683	186	81	257
March	13,649	1,516	787	242	653	209	80	259

(a) See paragraph 4 of the Explanatory Notes. (b) Comprises Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; Electricity, gas and water; Wholesale and retail trade; Finance, property and business services; Public administration and defence; Community services; Recreation, personal and other services.

TABLE 5. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : STATES AND TERRITORIES, AUSTRALIA,
WORKING DAYS LOST PER THOUSAND EMPLOYEES(a)

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
<i>Twelve months ended—</i>									
1985—									
December	209	236	411	48	187	138	213	159	228
1986—									
December	304	240	207	95	272	190	200	55	242
1987—									
December	366	172	87	91	213	177	111	143	223
1987—									
March	r289	r247	186	r92	r304	179	152	95	r239
1988—									
January	362	170	101	90	193	177	118	134	221
February	369	164	107	100	208	180	126	108	225
March	360	163	129	97	219	194	138	104	226
April	338	164	128	96	221	190	118	100	218
May	313	151	173	90	226	180	123	103	212
June	431	179	268	126	257	194	137	145	282
July	413	272	315	116	270	163	134	132	308
August	459	254	316	114	256	173	163	139	318
September	383	243	318	105	204	160	143	137	283
October	368	224	324	98	247	156	144	118	276
November	354	223	338	95	296	152	143	118	277
December	r341	214	337	93	299	118	158	112	269
1989—									
January	341	213	328	94	295	122	164	116	267
February	r321	210	331	88	276	117	153	111	257
March	336	213	313	98	249	96	137	106	259

(a) See paragraph 4 of the Explanatory Notes.

TABLE 6. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES ENDING IN THE 12 MONTHS TO MARCH 1989 : AUSTRALIA,
CAUSE, DURATION AND METHOD OF SETTLEMENT

	Number of disputes	Employees involved (directly and indirectly) ('000)	Working days lost ('000)
CAUSE OF DISPUTE			
Wages	249	423.4	506.6
Hours of work	26	19.5	32.1
Leave, pensions, compensation	60	15.7	46.2
Managerial policy	594	317.7	872.8
Physical working conditions	311	57.3	137.0
Trade unionism	197	24.8	32.2
Other(a)	40	33.3	34.4
Total	1,477	891.8	1,661.3
DURATION OF DISPUTE			
Up to and including 1 day	954	731.7	723.3
Over 1 to 2 days	187	45.5	100.0
Over 2 and less than 5 days	154	37.6	150.8
5 and less than 10 days	124	65.7	520.6
10 and less than 20 days	46	9.7	120.2
20 days and over	12	1.6	46.5
Total	1,477	891.8	1,661.3
METHOD OF SETTLEMENT			
Negotiation	286	112.5	178.3
State legislation	129	26.2	82.1
Federal and joint Federal-State legislation	200	247.8	791.1
Resumption without negotiation	843	500.6	572.3
Other methods	19	4.7	37.6
Total	1,477	891.8	1,661.3

(a) Includes disputes not elsewhere categorised.

GLOSSARY

Cause of dispute

1. The statistics of causes of industrial disputes relate to the main cause of the stoppage of work and not necessarily all causes that may have been responsible for the stoppage of work. For these reasons, the statistics do not reflect the relative importance of all causes of disputes between employers and employees. The causes are classified from information supplied by employers and according to standards determined by the International Labour Organisation. The classification of causes is as follows:

Wages. Claims involving general principles relating to wages e.g. increase (decrease) in wages; variation in method of payment or combined claims relating to wages, hours or conditions of work in which the claim about wages is deemed to be the most important. Combined claims in which other claims are deemed to be the most important are included under the relevant cause.

Hours of work. Claims involving general principles relating to hours of work e.g. decrease (increase) in hours; distribution of hours.

Leave, pensions, compensation. Claims involving general principles relating to holiday and leave provisions; pension and retirement provisions; workers' compensation provisions; insertion of penal clause provisions in awards.

Managerial policy. Disputes concerning the managerial policy of employers e.g. computation of wages, hours, leave, etc. in individual cases; docking pay, docking leave credits, fines; disciplinary matters including dismissals, suspension; alleged victimisation of union members or officials; principles of promotion and filling positions, transfers, roster complaints, retrenchment policy; employment of particular persons and personal disagreements; production limitations or quotas.

Physical working conditions. Disputes concerning physical working conditions and safety issues e.g. protective clothing and equipment; first aid services; uncomfortable working conditions; lack of, or the conditions of, amenities; claims for assistance; shortage or poor distribution of equipment or material; condition of equipment; new production methods and equipment; arduous physical tasks.

Trade unionism. Disputes concerning employment of non-unionists, inter-union and intra-union disputes; sympathy stoppages in support of employees in another industry; recognition of union activities.

Other. Disputes concerning protests directed against persons or situations other than those relating to the employer/employee relationship e.g. political matters; fining and gaoling of persons; lack of work; lack of adequate transport; non-award public holidays; accidents and attendance at funerals. Stoppages for which no reason is given are also included in this category.

Disputes

2. For these statistics, an *industrial dispute* is defined as a withdrawal from work by a group of employees, or a refusal by an employer or a number of employers to permit some or all of their employees to work, each

withdrawal or refusal being made in order to enforce a demand, to resist a demand, or to express a grievance.

3. A dispute affecting several establishments has been counted as a single dispute if it is organised or directed by one person or organisation in each State or Territory in which it occurs; otherwise it is counted as a separate dispute at each establishment and in each industry in which it occurred. Prior to December 1987 disputes were counted differently (refer to paragraph 5 of the Explanatory Notes for other details).

4. When there is a return to work between stoppages over the same issue, and the return to work is for less than two complete calendar months, the dispute is deemed continuing. When the return to work is for two or more calendar months, the dispute is considered to have ended at the time of the return to work. Should a subsequent stoppage occur, it is counted as a new dispute.

Duration of dispute

5. The *duration* of a dispute is the average number of working days lost per employee involved in the dispute. The duration of the dispute is calculated by dividing the total number of working days lost in the dispute by the number of employees involved (both directly and indirectly).

Employees

6. *Employees* refer to wage and salary earners only. Excluded are persons who are self-employed (e.g. building sub-contractors, owner-drivers of trucks) and employers.

7. *Employees directly involved* are those who actually participated in the dispute in order to enforce or resist a demand or to express a grievance.

8. *Employees indirectly involved* are those who ceased work at the establishment where the stoppages occurred, but who are not themselves parties to the dispute. Employees who ceased work at establishments other than those where the stoppages occurred are excluded. See paragraph 2 of the Explanatory Notes.

9. *Total employees involved* for any period of time are obtained by adding together the number of employees involved in each dispute in the period. For any period of time the figures may include details of the same employees involved in more than one dispute. The longer the period of reference, the more chance there is of some double counting in the number of employees involved. Where there are varying numbers of employees involved during the progress of a dispute, the figures of employees involved included in the statistics relate to the largest number of individual employees involved on any one day. Generally, the *total* number of employees involved for each year will equal the sum of the total number of employees involved in the first month of a year plus the number of employees *newly* involved in subsequent months. Differences between monthly and annual totals can occur due to the temporary cessation of stoppages which resume in subsequent months. Employees re-involved in this type of dispute are not classified as

employees newly involved in stoppages in the second period in which the dispute occurs.

Method of settlement

10. Statistics of the *method of settlement* of industrial disputes relate to the *method directly responsible for ending the stoppage of work* and not necessarily to the method (or methods) responsible for settling all matters in dispute. For these reasons, they do not reflect the relative importance of the work of various industrial tribunals operating under State and Federal legislation. The classification of method of settlement is as follows:

Negotiation. Private negotiation between the parties involved, or their representatives, without the intervention or assistance of authorities constituted under State or Federal industrial legislation.

State legislation. Intervention or assistance of an industrial authority or authorities created by or constituted under State conciliation and arbitration or wages board legislation, or reference to such authorities or compulsory or voluntary conference. Intervention, assistance or advice of State government officials or inspectors.

Federal and joint Federal-State legislation. Compulsory or voluntary conference or by intervention or assistance, of, or reference to, the industrial tribunals created by or constituted under the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, Coal Industry Acts, Stevedoring Industry Act, and other acts such as the Navigation Act; Public Service Arbitra-

tion Act. Intervention, assistance or advice of Federal government officials or inspectors.

Resumption without negotiation. This category may include some disputes which are settled subject to negotiation of a formal nature, such as industrial court hearings. Stop-work meetings are included, and this category may also include disputes settled by 'resumption' as stated, but about which no further information is available.

Other methods. Mediation; filling places of employees on strike or locked out; closing establishments permanently; dismissal of employees.

Working days lost

11. *Working days lost* refer to working days lost by employees directly and indirectly involved in the dispute and figures are generally as reported by parties to the dispute. For some disputes working days lost are estimated on the basis of the number of employees involved and the duration of the dispute.

Working days lost per thousand employees

12. *Working days lost per thousand employees* are calculated from working days lost and estimates of employees obtained from the ABS Survey of Employment and Earnings and the ABS Labour Force Survey. Refer to paragraph 4 of the Explanatory Notes for details of the break in series.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

1. The statistics in this publication relate to disputes which involved stoppages of work of ten working days or more at the establishments where the stoppages occurred. Ten working days is equivalent to the amount of ordinary time worked by ten people in one day.

2. The statistics of working days lost relate to the losses due to industrial disputes only (as defined in paragraph 2 of the Glossary). Effects on other establishments, such as stand-downs because of lack of materials, disruption of transport services, power cuts, etc. are not included.

3. The statistics of industrial disputes are compiled mainly from data obtained from employers (both private and public sector), from trade unions and from reports of government authorities. Particulars of some stoppages may have been estimated and the statistics therefore should be regarded as giving only a broad measure of the extent of industrial disputes as defined above.

Change in methodology

4. The basis for the calculation of working days lost per thousand employees was changed in January 1987 to include estimates of employees from the Survey of Employment and Earnings. They are combined with estimates of the number of employees in agriculture and in private households, obtained from the Labour Force Survey. Estimates have been recalculated on this basis for each month back to June 1984 and are available on request. In issues of this publication prior to January 1987, the estimates of numbers of employees were based entirely on Labour Force Survey data. The effect of the change is minimal at the 'all industries' level but is quite significant, in some cases, for individual industry groups.

5. The basis for the calculation of the number of disputes was changed in December 1987 (see paragraph 2 of the Glossary). Before that date, where the causes of several disputes were the same (e.g. National Wage Case disputes) the disputes were counted as one dispute in each State or Territory in which they occurred, irrespective of whether they were directed or organised by one person or organisation, or whether the dispute occurred in more than one industry. The reason for the change was to align the method of counting the number of disputes with the International Labour Organisation guidelines. In accordance with this change in definition, estimates of the number of disputes shown in this bulletin for past periods have been revised. In issues of this publication prior to September 1988, the number of disputes were counted on the old basis. Unpublished estimates of the number of disputes have been revised on the new basis from January 1985 and are available on request. The number of employees involved and working days lost remain unchanged.

Reliability of estimates

6. Inaccuracies may occur because of imperfections in information provided by respondents or in processing by the ABS. Inaccuracies of this kind are referred to as non-sampling errors. Although considerable care is taken in questionnaire design; in the instructions given to employers; and in editing the returns; these inaccuracies may occur in any enumeration, whether it be a full count or a sample.

Other ABS publications

7. Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:

Industrial Disputes, Australia, (6322.0)—issued annually

Labour Statistics, Australia, (6101.0) —issued annually

The Labour Force, Australia, Preliminary (6202.0) — issued monthly

The Labour Force, Australia (6203.0)—issued monthly

Trade Union Statistics, Australia, (6323.0)—issued annually

Trade Union Members, Australia, August 1988 (6325.0)

Employed Wage and Salary Earners, Australia (6248.0) —issued quarterly

Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Australia (6312.0) — issued monthly

Unpublished statistics

8. In addition to the statistics included in this and related publications, the ABS may have other relevant unpublished data available. Inquiries should be made to the officer whose name appears in the *Phone Inquiries* section of the inquiries box at the front of this publication, or to Information Services in the nearest ABS office.

9. Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications, Australia* (1101.0). The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Publications Advice* (1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The Catalogue and Publications Advice are available from any ABS office.

Symbols and other usages

r estimates revised since last issue
— nil or rounded to zero

10. Where estimates have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

Electronic services

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...to be used in the following manner...

Other ABS publications

1. Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:

2. The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a quarterly survey of the labour force in Australia. It provides information on the number of people in the labour force, their characteristics, and their activities. The LFS is conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and is published quarterly.

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Other ABS publications

1. Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:

2. The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a quarterly survey of the labour force in Australia. It provides information on the number of people in the labour force, their characteristics, and their activities. The LFS is conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and is published quarterly.

3. The LFS is a survey of the labour force in Australia. It provides information on the number of people in the labour force, their characteristics, and their activities. The LFS is conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and is published quarterly.

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